

FOOTBALLTM MANAGER 2020

Football Manager 2020 Review Guide

Not for publication

There is a renewed focus on long-term play in Football Manager 2020 with greater emphasis also placed on bringing each club's unique identities and objectives out into the gameplay. The average user's total play time for FM19 was 250 hours and so we wanted to go to greater lengths to ensure that the 250th hour (and beyond) feels as fresh as the first hour which we feel that we have achieved via a number of new game mechanics.

Perhaps the most notable addition to the game this year comes in the form of Club Vision – which will fundamentally change the way that you approach every single save and every single club you manage in Football Manger. Each club now feels more unique with bespoke objectives tailored to the ambitions of the chairman and the history and philosophy of the club. As the manager you will have to adapt your philosophy and managerial style to suit each club and challenge that you take on.

We have brought player development out to the fore via the new Development Centre which allows managers to be more hands-on in trying to maximise their players' potential, should they wish to. The effects of your youth policy and recruitment will be shown on the quality of players that are highlighted in the Development Centre as you progress through the seasons.

Alongside these completely new elements to the core game experience, matches in FM20 are the best looking in the series' history while the attacking and defensive AI are the most intelligent to date, particularly in regards to off-the ball movement. There are also a number of quality of life improvements that aim to give both core and more casual players the ability to get the most out of their time in the game.

You may wish to simulate a couple of seasons into the future to see how the long-term features can affect the game over multiple seasons. You can do this on the Home screen by using the 'My Profile' dropdown menu.

These additions combine to make FM20 the most engrossing release in Football Manager history but, of course, we would say that. Here's some further information about the key features in the game this year which should help you when you're making your own judgment.

Club Vision

The board elements in the game have undergone their biggest overhaul in the series' history as they now have a much broader influence within FM, particularly on long-term saves.

The board now set objectives for you to hit that give each save more of a unique identity. Because these objectives are far-reaching and designed to be achieved over several seasons, it means that you're not just being judged on your league position alone each season but on other factors such as whether you're bringing enough young players into the first team or whether you're projected to turn a profit in the transfer window in three years' time. They are tailored to each club and take into account that club's philosophy, history and standing in the world of football. Failure to meet key objectives regardless of league position could result in you being sacked as a result.

Your club vision is outlined to you in the new Welcome Meeting. This takes place before you even get to your inbox on your first day at the club and involves the board setting out their expectations and ambitions as well as giving you background on the club, first-team squad, backroom staff and your responsibilities. This meeting takes place in the new boardroom environment that scales up and down depending on your club's facilities and playing level.

The board screens have also been revamped to display more graphical information and the board make more intelligent decisions.

Development Centre

The Development Centre is a brand-new section of the game that brings together a number of areas relating to player development into one centralised hub. The Development Centre is designed to give you the ability to maximise the potential of your young players more easily.

The Development Centre lets you see an overview of the young players at your club with relevant advice about their development displayed. The 'ones to watch' in your squad are also highlighted on this screen along with players whose development is in need of attention. Also, on the overview screen are top-line assessments of your youth squads which can be directly affected by the amount of resource you put into your youth setup over the course of your time at the club.

There is now a specific screen within the Development Centre for viewing your loan players both in and out of the club with loan suggestions being made by your staff - including the new role of Loan Manager if you have one in your backroom team.

There are also tabs within the Development Centre for viewing your youth squads and youth intake in more detail as well as your entire youth staff and their responsibilities. From the youth squad menus, you can view their tactics, training schedule, recent matches and upcoming fixtures. In the run up to getting your yearly youth intake through you will get a preview of what you can expect from them including any notable prospects and areas where you may be short of players, giving you the opportunity to plan your squad management for seasons to come.

Proposed Playing Time

This is a revamp to the squad structure in the game. Now, playing minutes define the status of a player within the squad and can be negotiated in a player's contract. In the contract negotiations, you can offer playing time over future seasons – for the full duration of their contract, if you wish. This can be used to give a wonderkid a pathway into the first-team without having to declare him a key player from the moment you sign him/offer him the contract. At the same time, you may want to use this to plot a route down the pecking order for an ageing, senior player.

This affects players you send out on loan too with prospective offers showing the amount of first team minutes your player can expect to get during the loan spell.

You'll be able to keep track of how well you're sticking to the promised playing time via the squad screen and discuss any discrepancies between actual and proposed playing time with your players. Your backroom staff will provide you with advice relating to playing time and give you a summary of player progression and how that may affect a player's playing time from one season to the next. You should find that this makes it much easier to prevent players coming to your door complaining about a lack of first-team minutes.

Match Experience

The match experience in FM20 is the most realistic in the series so far. The new player models this year are more lifelike which also extends into the manager avatars that have also been remodelled along with the kits and manager attire which now look better and move more naturally in conjunction with the character models.

There is now a more noticeable effect from the weather on the pitch. Pitches can be rain soaked with patches of mud and water appearing along with slide tackle trails and boot prints. Conversely, a match played out in a period of sustained sunny weather will show the pitch dried out and lighter.

A new image-based lighting system gives the match a more consistently natural look during all weather conditions.

In terms of the AI, there has been a focus on improving attacking movement and defensive intelligence so that players are in more realistic positions when their team is on the attack and are more adept at tracking runs in defence. There has been a complete overhaul of the marking code and all existing animations have been cleaned up to work with the new player models in addition to a range of new motion-captured animations being added into the game. Goalkeepers have also been significantly improved so that they react more realistically and position themselves better when facing an attack, distribute the ball better and make a wider variety of saves, catches and parries.

Backroom Staff

There have been several improvements to the backroom aspects of Football Manager for FM20. Firstly, your assistant manager or a senior figure in your backroom team will now propose a suggested squad for you to use ahead of matchday. This advice can also be accessed anytime on the tactics screen too.

There are a few new staff roles this year to reflect the changing face of modern football. These are: the Loan Manager and the Technical Director. The Loan Manager will advise on players you may wish to loan out and will oversee the progress of your current loanees while the Technical Director will advise on staff improvements.

There's also a responsibilities revamp that will make it easier to change individual responsibilities and see your overall responsibilities setup. We know that people want different levels of responsibility within the game and FM20 allows you to completely customise the experience to suit your needs with more tasks available to be delegated than ever before. The responsibilities have been brought out into the UI across the game so you can delegate tasks on the fly across relevant screens.

Finally, there is a greater level of backroom advice available to you including more detailed tactical feedback and match analysis.

And More

In addition to these headline features, we've announced a range of other features – some big, some more subtle – and you can find a full list of everything that has been announced so far here: <https://www.footballmanager.com/the-byline/fm20-features-round-up>

There are, of course, a huge number of features that we've left for you to discover yourselves as well. We hope you enjoy your time in FM20.

Caveat List

- All data is not final.
- The match engine is not final.
- Work on updating and balancing Club Visions is ongoing.
- The game is not compatible with Mac 10.10 or earlier.
- Mac users on 10.15 Catalina need to have the 64-bit version of Steam installed: https://support.steampowered.com/kb_article.php?ref=1055-ISJM-8568
- Users playing on OSX 10.11 may experience crashes during matches.
- The updating of competition rules remains a work in progress.
- Work on balancing the transfers of players and staff is ongoing including in regards to boards blocking excessive incoming transfers or cheap outgoing transfers.
- The Light Skin continues to be worked on.

You might come across some bugs not listed here while playing FM20 Beta. Please feel free to report any bugs via the 'Report Bug' button on the in-game sidebar and we'll aim to get the issues fixed before the game's release on 19 November.

Review Embargo

The review embargo for Football Manager 2020 is set on Thursday 14 November at 3PM GMT / 4PM CET / 7AM PDT.

There is no streaming embargo in place for the FM2020 Beta, but any content that is considered a review, will have to adhere the embargo as per above.